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warfare, which consists in one standing quite still while his adversary strikes him on the head with the waddy, and he in turn striking the next blow, and so on, till one is either killed or disabled—a curious style—he who has the thickest head must be sure to be victor. Should Mr. Atkinson wish to compare them with others of the same family he will find one at the Museum of the Zoological Society. My brother-in-law sent over an entire skeleton of a young native girl as a present to Captain Marriott. It was looked on as a great natural curiosity on account of the skin being entire over the bones, and the hair which was long and black still attached to the skull.”

On the Idiotic Family of Downham, in Norfolk. By H. G. ATKINSON,
Esq., F.G.S., F.A.S.L.

THE family are, or were, residents of Downham, Norfolk, and the account I received from Mr. Brown, a farmer in the neighbourhood, is as follows:—“Of this family there are three sisters and two brothers; their names are Susan, Mary, Maria, Thomas, and John Franklin. The parents kept a low public house. The moral character of the man was not good, he was a drunkard and of very inferior intellect; the woman was inoffensive and of weak intellect. The father died at 72; the mother at 50; of the children, John died at 47; Thomas at 40; the sisters are still living (1845), Susan, aged 60; Mary, 55; Maria, 50. Susan and Maria, like John, are not much more than brutes, except that they can talk. Mary can read a little and sew, and is willing to do as much as she is able; Susan and Maria could never be induced to do anything whatsoever. Of the brothers, Thomas was a curious character, was fond of being with horses, and of riding, and he could groom a horse well; was fond of soldiers, and of going to see the players, and he could imitate what he had seen; but you could not depend on the truth of a word he said, and he would pilfer whatever came in his way. John was also fond of seeing the players, but never attempting to imitate, and when you met him always said that he expected the players next week; but, with a careful person with him, would work at common labour tolerably well.”

I am sorry I could not get this satisfactorily identified, and I dare say now all concerned are dead; but the general fact of a whole family of idiots with manifestly defective brains is very striking. The parents, to take to and keep a public-house, and bring up these poor creatures, could not have been so very deficient of intellect, as intellect goes with suchlike—or, if so, the question of hereditary taint is the more important.

The thanks of the Society having been given to Mr. Atkinson for his papers,

Dr. THOMAS BALLARD observed that he had peculiar views as to the origin of idiocy, which he should be glad to bring before the notice of the Anthropological Society. The condition of idiocy was generally supposed to be hereditary, and to depend on some moral or physical defect of the parents; but he believed that opinion to be a mistake, and that idiocy depended on the blighting of the individual in early infancy. He had examined a great many idiots, and traced their history; and he had found the case of all to have been a common one. It was a condition of severe illness in early infancy; and, when circumstances occurred to ward off a fatal result, the individual, when he grew up, was idiotic. He had had one or two cases of infants who had recovered from such illness, which had been followed by idiocy. The nature of the illness was extreme diarrhœa, followed by convulsions and general emaciation. In such cases, the diarrhœa was caused by a fruitless effort to obtain food by sucking, a continuance of which leads in many instances to the destruction of the stomach. The fact of idiots generally having been exposed to this evil, is shewn in the frequency with which habits of constantly sucking the hand or the tongue are retained among them. It was not difficult to account for several members of the same family being idiotic from the same cause. In a family in London, several members of which were afflicted with idiocy, the effect had been traced to this cause. They were all accustomed to habits of continual sucking, and had been subjected to the same condition of illness in their infancy. The important practical point resulting from this view of the subject is, that idiocy may occur in any family, or may be prevented in all.

Dr. GIBB said the view of the subject of idiocy entertained by Dr. Ballard was now attracting the attention of the medical profession. In the Westminster Hospital, infants were observed who had the habit of sucking their thumbs, and it was considered of importance to stop it, as it was found to injure their health. Dr. Ballard's opinions could, indeed, be well borne out; they were well worthy of attention, and many medical men had become converts to his doctrine. It was explainable in this manner. The habit of sucking injured the system by inducing infants to swallow the secretions of the glands of the mouth, intended to be mixed with food, and, when swallowed without any, they produced injury to the digestive organs, and the constitutional powers became enfeebled.

The following paper was then read:—

On the Primary Anthropoid and Secondary Mute Origin of the European Races, versus the Theory of Migration from an External Source. By the Rev. DUNBAR I. HEATH, M.A., F.R.S.L., F.A.S.L.

THE object of the present paper is to state, to weigh, and to balance between the difficulties attendant on two opposite theories of the origin of the European races of men. One view originates them by natural descent out of European mutes, themselves the offspring of anthropoids; the other explains the first human peopling of Europe